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United Nations

Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Report on the seventeenth session (16–17 April 2018)

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Report on the seventeenth session
(16–27 April 2018)

United Nations • New York, 2018

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Chapter I

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

A. Draft decisions recommended by the Permanent Forum for adoption by the Council

1. The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues recommends to the Economic and Social Council the adoption of the following draft decisions:

Draft decision I
International expert group meeting on the theme "Conservation and the rights of indigenous peoples"

The Economic and Social Council decides to authorize a three-day international expert group meeting on the theme "Conservation and the rights of indigenous peoples".

Draft decision II
Venue and dates for the eighteenth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

The Economic and Social Council decides that the eighteenth session of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues shall be held at United Nations Headquarters from 22 April to 3 May 2019.

Draft decision III
Report of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on its seventeenth session and provisional agenda for its eighteenth session

The Economic and Social Council:

(a) Takes note of the report of the Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues on its seventeenth session;[1]

(b) Approves the provisional agenda for the eighteenth session of the Permanent Forum as set out below:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Follow-up to the recommendations of the Permanent Forum.
4. Implementation of the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum with reference to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
5. Discussion on the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages
6. Dialogue with indigenous peoples: collective rights to lands, territories and resources
7. Dialogue with Member States.

[1] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2018, Supplement No. 23* (E/2018/43).

8. Dialogue with the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system.

9. Discussion on the theme "Traditional knowledge: generation, transmission and protection".

10. 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

11. Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples and the Chair of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

12. Follow-up to the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples:

(a) Implementation of national action plans, strategies and other measures;

(b) Ways to enhance the participation of indigenous peoples at the United Nations;

(c) Implementation of the United Nations system-wide action plan on indigenous peoples.

13. Regional dialogues between indigenous peoples and Member States.

14. Future work of the Permanent Forum, including issues considered by the Economic and Social Council and emerging issues.

15. Provisional agenda for the nineteenth session.

16. Adoption of the report of the Permanent Forum on its eighteenth session.

B. Matters brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council

2. The Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues has identified the proposals, objectives, recommendations and areas of possible future action set out below and, through the Economic and Social Council, recommends that States, entities of the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations, indigenous peoples, the private sector and non-governmental organizations assist in their realization.

3. It is the understanding of the secretariat of the Permanent Forum that those proposals, objectives, recommendations and areas of possible future action to be carried out by the United Nations, as set out below, will be implemented to the extent possible within the context of the approved programme of work of the relevant entities.

Recommendations of the Permanent Forum

Discussion on the theme "Indigenous peoples' collective rights to lands, territories and resources"

4. The rights to lands, territories and resources are at the heart of indigenous peoples' struggles around the world. Indigenous peoples' relationships to their ancestral lands are the source of their cultural, spiritual and social identity, the foundation upon which their traditional knowledge systems have developed and the cornerstone of their physical and economic well-being.

5. The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples recognizes the right of indigenous peoples to self-determination (arts. 3–4), their collective rights to own and control their lands and resources (arts. 25–27), their right to free, prior and informed consent in relation to legislation, measures and projects that may have an impact on their rights (arts. 10–11, 19, 28–29 and 32) and their right to participate in decision-making processes (arts. 5, 18 and 27). These rights are further enshrined in the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) of the International Labour Organization and in expanding jurisprudence developed by human rights treaty bodies, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights and the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights.

6. Positive developments have been achieved in setting international human rights standards for the rights of indigenous peoples to lands, territories and resources, including by regional human rights mechanisms in Africa and the Americas. The Permanent Forum welcomes those developments, including the recent decision of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights in the case of the Ogiek community in Kenya. The Forum encourages indigenous peoples and States to engage further with regional mechanisms and to implement their decisions effectively.

7. A number of States have recognized the collective rights of indigenous peoples to lands, territories and resources through constitutional or legal protection, adjudication, constructive agreements with indigenous peoples or administrative programmes. Countries that have taken steps in that direction include Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Canada, the Congo, Denmark, Ecuador, Indonesia, New Zealand (Aotearoa), Norway and the Philippines. In other countries, including Australia, Colombia and the United States of America, tracts of land and/or territories have been set aside for collective indigenous control. The Permanent Forum welcomes this progress, although there remains a wide gap between formal recognition and actual implementation.

8. In countries in which such rights are recognized, they are not fully implemented, or procedures for the implementation of those rights, such as land or resource mapping, demarcation and titling, have often not been completed, suffer significant delays or are shelved. The lack of enforcement of laws, as well as contradictory laws and regulations, frequently results in the de facto denial of the rights accorded to indigenous peoples. The Permanent Forum commends States for recognizing the collective rights of indigenous peoples to lands, territories and resources and at the same time urges them to take immediate steps for the implementation of those rights through programmes for mapping, titling or other actions and legislative reforms. The Forum urges States to report to it by its twentieth session on steps taken in that regard.

9. A majority of States have yet to grant official recognition to indigenous peoples, let alone their collective rights to lands, territories and resources. The Permanent Forum expresses its grave concern about the non-recognition of indigenous peoples, in particular in Africa and Asia, and recommends that States incorporate the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into national legislation, policies and programmes.

10. The Permanent Forum stresses that ensuring the collective rights of indigenous peoples to lands, territories and resources is not only for their well-being, but also for addressing some of the most pressing global challenges, such as climate change and environmental degradation. Advancing those rights is an effective way to protect critical ecosystems, waterways and biological diversity.

11. The Permanent Forum emphasizes that achieving the Sustainable Development Goals is not possible without fulfilling the rights of indigenous peoples to lands, territories and resources. The Forum thus calls upon States to include the recognition of customary rights or tenure of indigenous peoples to their lands and resources under

target 3 of Sustainable Development Goal 2, which calls for secure and equal access to land.

12. The Permanent Forum calls on States, in consultation with indigenous peoples, to establish national judicial institutions tasked with identifying lands, waters, coastal waters and other resources to which the indigenous peoples concerned have established ownership and usufruct rights, and to demarcate such lands and resources.

13. The Permanent Forum draws attention to the number of reports, from around the world, of acts of intimidation and reprisal, including restrictions on the ability of representatives of indigenous peoples to attend the Forum's sessions. Indigenous leaders and human rights defenders face disproportionately high rates of intimidation and reprisal, as shown by various studies, including by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders.

14. Given that the United Nations relies on the cooperation of the people whom it serves and that everyone, individually and in association with others, has the right to unhindered access to and communication with the Organization, the Permanent Forum requests the Secretary-General, through the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights and in consultation with other relevant United Nations mechanisms, to report on trends related to intimidation and reprisals against indigenous peoples who seek to engage with the United Nations, including by providing suggestions to prevent and address reprisals through reporting from all parts of the United Nations system and with input from indigenous peoples, to the Forum at its eighteenth session, in 2019.[2]

15. The Permanent Forum continues to be concerned that the World Bank's new environmental and social safeguard 7 allows the conversion of the collective territories of indigenous peoples into individual ownership rights, even though it recognizes the importance of protecting the collective attachment of indigenous peoples to their lands. Providing funding for States to divide the lands of indigenous peoples generates conflict, irreparably harms livelihoods and traditional resource management strategies and erodes the governance structures of indigenous peoples. Paragraph 29 of environmental and social safeguard 7 should urgently be revised to ensure that indigenous peoples maintain their collective rights to lands, territories and resources in all projects funded by the Bank.

16. The Forum reiterates its request to the Inter-Agency Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators to make the land-related indicator operational, including on changing land use and the security of land tenure in the traditional territories of indigenous peoples.

17. The Permanent Forum urges all agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system to incorporate the recognition of the collective rights of indigenous peoples to lands, territories and resources into their policies and programmes at the country level and to report to the Forum on progress made at its eighteenth session.

18. The Permanent Forum expresses its concern for the indigenous peoples of certain African countries, who continue to be victims of violations of their rights to lands, territories and resources. Multiple threats and obstacles hinder their social, economic, political and legal development, including discrimination and marginalization; lack of rights to land and natural and productive resources; denial and lack of access to justice; violations of cultural rights; denial of the rights to legal recognition, political representation and participation; lack of access to basic social services; denial of the right to existence and self-development; violence against indigenous individuals and communities, including rape of indigenous women; and

[2] See www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Reprisals/Pages/ReprisalsIndex.aspx.

multiple-impact land conflicts arising from development and conservation projects that fail to take into account the rights and interests of indigenous peoples.

19. Recalling articles 3–4, 8, 18, 25–26 and 32 of the Declaration, the Permanent Forum urges African States to promote, recognize and protect the collective rights of indigenous peoples to their lands, territories and resources through the development of mechanisms to ensure the legal recognition of land and resource rights, the resolution of land disputes, fair and equitable redress, and the creation of permanent dialogue frameworks to facilitate political participation and representation of indigenous peoples in decision-making.

20. The Permanent Forum urges States to provide information to it on developments relating to the collective rights of indigenous peoples and constructive agreements with indigenous peoples at its eighteenth session, including the following:

(a) Effective measures taken to halt land alienation in the territories of indigenous peoples;

(b) Financial and technical assistance provided to indigenous peoples to map the boundaries of their communal lands;

(c) Legal and policy frameworks that have been implemented for the registration of collective titles;

(d) National legislation adopted with the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples when such legislation involves their territories, lands and natural resources.

21. The Permanent Forum requests all States to include developments relating to the rights of indigenous peoples in their regular reports to the Human Rights Council under the universal periodic review mechanism.

International expert group meeting on the theme "Sustainable development in the territories of indigenous peoples"

22. Based on a recommendation of the Permanent Forum, the United Nations organized an international expert group meeting on the theme "Sustainable development in the territories of indigenous peoples" in January 2018. The meeting recommended that the Forum should give special consideration to the experience of indigenous peoples with autonomy and constructive arrangements in their expression of self-determination, including through a compilation and dissemination of good practices.

23. The expert group meeting further recommended that the Permanent Forum should explore opportunities to work with and support indigenous peoples' mechanisms that engage with international processes, such as the indigenous peoples major group (2030 Agenda), the International Indigenous Peoples' Forum on Climate Change (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change) and the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity (Convention on Biological Diversity). These are key engagement mechanisms to ensure the inclusion of indigenous peoples and their contribution in key global decision-making processes which could be strengthened through enhanced engagement with the Permanent Forum at its annual sessions and throughout the year.

Conservation and the rights of indigenous peoples

24. The Permanent Forum expresses concern that conservation programmes based on the concept of excluding human beings from the environment have had negative consequences on the rights of indigenous peoples through forced evictions and other

harms, while their natural custodianship of the environment and ecosystems has been unrecognized.

25. The Permanent Forum urges the International Union for Conservation of Nature and the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity to undertake, in collaboration with indigenous peoples, a study on the contributions of indigenous peoples to the management of ecosystems and the protection of biodiversity, and submit a report to the Forum by its nineteenth session.

26. The Permanent Forum recommends that the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the International Union for Conservation of Nature actively engage with indigenous organizations, relevant United Nations entities, non-governmental organizations and other actors to develop a set of actions and commitments in relation to conservation and human rights in the context of the post-2020 biodiversity framework and the next World Conservation Congress.

27. The Permanent Forum requests the Global Environment Facility, as well as other funding mechanisms, to prioritize support for conservation approaches that are led or co-managed by indigenous peoples.

28. The Permanent Forum calls on States to enter into discussions with indigenous peoples whose traditional lands are now incorporated in protected areas, with a view to reaching binding agreements that will not only acknowledge the legitimate interests of wildlife conservation but also recognize and guarantee the rights of those communities under articles 8 (2), 18, 19, 26 and 32 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

29. The Permanent Forum calls on international donors to engage in dialogue with indigenous peoples with the aim of developing an approach to conservation based on recognition of and respect for the rights of indigenous peoples.

30. The Permanent Forum invites the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples to strengthen collaboration in charting ways forward in promoting conservation models that recognize and respect the rights of indigenous peoples.

31. The Permanent Forum invites the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, at its forthcoming meeting on transitional justice, to examine opportunities for restitution in the context of historic conservation-related evictions and other harms.

32. The Permanent Forum urges Member States to reform the agreements of intergovernmental conservation organizations, such as the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization, to comply with the principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Implementation of the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum with reference to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages

33. The Permanent Forum welcomes the work carried out by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in preparation for the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages and welcomes and supports the action plan for the International Year that was developed in cooperation with Member States, the Forum, the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples and the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as indigenous peoples and a range of different stakeholders. The Forum calls upon Member States to implement the action plan in partnership with indigenous peoples, respecting the

principle of "nothing about us without us", including the establishment of national steering committees and national action plans for the International Year. States should allocate adequate funding for the successful implementation of the International Year.

34. The Permanent Forum recommends that indigenous peoples, as the rightful owners and custodians of their own languages, initiate and develop their own action plans and appropriate measures for the International Year and awareness-raising campaigns to draw attention to the situation of indigenous languages.

35. The Permanent Forum invites the General Assembly to request that UNESCO report on activities carried out during the International Year, and subsequent impacts and follow-up activities after 2019, at its seventy-fifth session.

36. The Permanent Forum recommends that UNESCO, in active collaboration with other relevant United Nations entities, organize as a major event of the International Year a world conference or high-level event on indigenous languages, which would be preceded by regional conferences, and encourages Member States to support its organization. The Forum emphasizes that all events organized to mark the International Year must include the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples.

37. The Permanent Forum recommends that United Nations entities, including the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues, take effective measures to support the promotion of indigenous languages and the successful implementation of the goals and objectives of the International Year, including in activities related to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the system-wide action plan on the rights of indigenous peoples, the celebration of international days and other processes.

38. The Permanent Forum urges the Secretary-General to appoint a special envoy on indigenous languages, in consultation with indigenous peoples.

39. The Permanent Forum urges Member States to establish permanent financing structures for ensuring the protection of the language initiatives of indigenous peoples, such as the Giellagáldu project in Finland, Norway and Sweden.

Women, youth and children

40. The Permanent Forum recommends that the Commission on the Status of Women organize a high-level interactive dialogue on the rights of indigenous women, to coincide with the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Fourth World Conference on Women, in 2020, to review progress made towards the Sustainable Development Goals with a focus on linkages with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Forum invites Member States, in cooperation with indigenous peoples' organizations and with the support of the United Nations system, to conduct preparatory processes, with the full and effective participation of indigenous women of all ages.

41. The Permanent Forum expresses considerable concern with the disparity between indigenous and national maternal mortality rates in many countries and encourages Member States to incorporate an intercultural approach to sexual and reproductive health services and promoting the inclusion of indigenous health workers. The Permanent Forum invites Member States to seek the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and other relevant agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system in taking forward this recommendation and in strengthening the disaggregation of data by ethnicity, in the area of sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights, in the 2020 census round to strengthen the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

42. The Permanent Forum recommends that agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, in collaboration with indigenous peoples' organizations, monitor the high levels of global violence and threats directed at indigenous women human rights defenders. The Forum calls for an immediate halt to the criminalization, incarceration, intimidation, coercion and assassination of, and death threats to, all indigenous human and environmental rights defenders.

43. The Permanent Forum calls for the implementation on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which gives clear guidance to States on the need for them to minimize childhood exposure to toxic chemicals through water, food, air and other sources of exposure. It is critical that environmental regulators be educated specifically regarding article 24 of the Convention.

Health

44. Existing conventions governing the use and disposal of toxic chemicals and wastes do not adequately protect the rights of the world's most vulnerable, including indigenous peoples, who disproportionately suffer from their indiscriminate and irresponsible use.

45. The Permanent Forum welcomes the preliminary report of the Special Rapporteur on the implications for human rights of the environmentally sound management and disposal of hazardous substances and wastes, which was presented at the current session, in accordance with recommendation 46 of the Forum at its sixteenth session, and invites the Special Rapporteur to present his final report to the Forum at its eighteenth session.

46. The Forum recommends that the International Conference on Chemicals Management establish an advisory committee of indigenous peoples in its intersessional process for considering the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management and the sound management of chemicals and waste beyond 2020.

47. The Forum recommends the creation of a global, legally binding regime for toxic industrial chemicals and hazardous pesticides, the vast majority of which are currently unregulated under existing conventions, to protect the rights of everyone, including indigenous peoples, from the grave threats to human rights presented by the ongoing chemical intensification of the global economy. Such a regime should have strong accountability and compliance mechanisms and be in conformity with international human rights standards, including the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

48. The Permanent Forum welcomes the adoption, in 2017, of the first policy on ethnicity and health by the States members of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) and invites the World Health Organization (WHO) to follow this initiative and expand on this work at the global level. The Forum also notes the initiative of PAHO/WHO to develop a strategy and plan of action on ethnicity and health for the Americas, the implementation of a health plan for indigenous youth in Latin America and the launch of the Virtual Health Library on Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine for the Americas, and invites PAHO/WHO to report to the Forum at its eighteenth session on progress achieved.

49. The cultural and clinical knowledge of traditional indigenous midwives and their contributions to the well-being and positive health outcomes of indigenous peoples are largely unacknowledged in national health systems. Indigenous midwives work tirelessly to improve maternal and infant health throughout a person's reproductive life cycle and, in particular, during pregnancy, birth and the post-partum period.

50. Despite this critical role, community-regulated indigenous midwifery is often undermined and actively criminalized, to the detriment of the health of indigenous peoples. To close the gap between indigenous and non-indigenous health outcomes, the practice of indigenous midwifery must be supported by state health policy and integration. The right of indigenous peoples to self-determination extends to their reproductive health, and States should put an end to the criminalization of indigenous midwifery and make the necessary legislative and regulatory amendments to legitimize indigenous midwives who are recognized by their communities as health-care providers. States should also support the education of new traditional indigenous midwives via multiple routes of education, including apprenticeships and the oral transmission of knowledge.

51. The Permanent Forum reiterates previous recommendations that WHO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and UNFPA, as well as regional health organizations and Governments, fully incorporate a cultural perspective into health policies and programmes and reproductive health services aimed at providing indigenous women with quality health care, including emergency obstetric care, voluntary family planning and skilled attendance at birth. The roles of traditional midwives should be re-evaluated and expanded so that they may assist indigenous women during their reproductive health processes and act as cultural brokers between health systems and indigenous peoples.

52. The Permanent Forum recommends that the WHO End TB Strategy and the Global Partnership to Stop Tuberculosis, in collaboration with UNFPA, PAHO and the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues, organize an expert group meeting on tuberculosis by 2020 to analyse the sociocultural and economic determinants of health for the prevention, care and treatment of tuberculosis in indigenous communities, with the cooperation of the Forum, in order to ensure the realization of target 3 of Sustainable Development Goal 3. The Forum also recommends the review of the Moscow Declaration to End TB, which considers indigenous peoples to be disproportionately affected by tuberculosis.

53. The Permanent Forum appreciates the steps taken by the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, UNFPA and the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues for the organization of an international workshop on indigenous peoples and HIV/AIDS, and calls on Member States and United Nations entities to contribute to the workshop.

54. The Permanent Forum is concerned that, across the globe, indigenous women and adolescents face persistent inequalities and stigma, especially in relation to maternal health and maternal mortality, yet the lack of data in this area renders them invisible and presents a major barrier to efforts to address the issue. Indigenous women are overwhelmingly less likely to have received health-care services. Indigenous women are three times more likely to have had no antenatal care and twice as likely to give birth without a skilled birth attendant, and have a significantly higher adolescent birth rate. This is directly related to the poverty, discrimination and marginalization that indigenous women frequently face.

55. The Permanent Forum welcomes the study presented by UNFPA, in collaboration with CHIRAPAQ (Centro de Culturas Indígenas del Perú), entitled "Progress and challenges regarding the recommendations of the Forum on sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender-based violence".

56. The Permanent Forum invites UNFPA to make efforts to disseminate the findings of the study at the global, regional and country levels among Member States, United Nations mechanisms and indigenous organizations. The Forum also invites UNFPA to engage in concerted dialogue with the nine Member States that were part

of the study on next steps to put into action the recommendations of the study, and to report to the Forum at its eighteenth session on progress made.

Culture

57. The Permanent Forum encourages UNESCO, States, the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and indigenous peoples to continue to engage in active dialogue aimed at achieving recognition of the rights of indigenous peoples to repatriation of their human remains and sacred items, in accordance with the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples and articles 11 and 12 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The Forum reiterates its call for a new United Nations mechanism for international repatriation.

58. The Permanent Forum is concerned that the WIPO Voluntary Fund for Accredited Indigenous and Local Communities is depleted, and emphasizes the critical importance of the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples and local communities in the negotiations of the WIPO Intergovernmental Committee on Intellectual Property and Genetic Resources, Traditional Knowledge and Folklore in accordance with article 41 of the Declaration. To that end, the Forum strongly encourages the Member States of WIPO to contribute to the WIPO Voluntary Fund and invites them to explore and identify innovative ways of raising funds for the Fund, including through use of the regular budget of WIPO. The Forum also recommends that WIPO increase the number of indigenous participants through the regular budget and allow their full and effective participation in the negotiations.

Environment

59. The Permanent Forum heard from many indigenous peoples who expressed their concern regarding States granting concessions for extractive industries, infrastructure projects, large-scale agriculture or hydroelectric dams without the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples. This has led to inevitable social, economic and cultural conflicts between governments and indigenous peoples such as those concerning the Arctic Railway in Finland. The Forum reiterates that the Member States must act in compliance with international human rights standards, including through adequate consultations with affected indigenous peoples, respecting the right to their free, prior and informed consent at all stages while also ensuring mitigation measures, compensation and fair and equitable benefit-sharing.

60. The Permanent Forum reiterates its concern over environmental violence, in particular the pervasive impacts of such violence on indigenous women and girls. The Forum takes note with appreciation of the recommendations from the third International Indigenous Women's Symposium on Environment and Reproductive Health, held at Columbia University in New York on 14 and 15 April 2018. The Forum recommends that members of the Inter-Agency Support Group on Indigenous Peoples' Issues and the relevant special procedures of the Human Rights Council consider ways to address and incorporate the recommendations from that Symposium.

Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples and the Chair of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples

61. Human rights defenders are increasingly targeted as terrorists for promoting and protecting decades-old guaranteed rights. This alarming trend is seen in every region. Even the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples, Victoria Tauli-Corpuz; former expert member of the Permanent Forum Joan Carling; and former member of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples José Molintas, have been declared terrorists in a petition by the Government of the Philippines. The Forum rejects this dangerous precedent and calls on the Government of the

Philippines to remove their names, and the names of other indigenous leaders, from the petition and to ensure their safety as they continue promoting and protecting the rights of indigenous peoples. Further, the Forum urges the Government of the Philippines to repeal the Human Security Act, comply with its international human rights obligations and pursue its commitments under the Comprehensive Agreement on Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law.

62. The Permanent Forum recommends that relevant special procedures of the Human Rights Council collaborate with each other and with other human rights bodies to address the situation of indigenous human rights defenders through monitoring, mediation, analysis and the provision of concrete recommendations for the effective protection of indigenous human rights defenders.

63. The Permanent Forum requests the Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, with the support of the secretariat of the Forum, to expand and strengthen the United Nations response to reprisals and threats faced by indigenous human rights and environmental defenders by enhancing high-level engagement on reprisals, ensuring appropriate action on urgent cases when reprisals occur.

64. The Permanent Forum welcomes the participation, at its seventeenth session, of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination and invites the Working Group to conduct a study on private militaries and security companies in extractive industries and agribusiness and their impact on the human and collective rights of indigenous peoples.

65. The Permanent Forum takes note with concern of the situation of indigenous peoples of the Sahel and other parts of Africa, where a number of factors, including climate change, are having a devastating impact on economic development and human security. The lack of recognition of the collective rights of these peoples has created fertile ground for their loss of territories and resources and the emergence of complex forms of conflict, including violent extremism. The Forum calls on the Working Group on Indigenous Populations/Communities in Africa of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights to prepare recommendations for the consideration of the African Union to address this situation, in partnership with the Economic Commission for Africa and other regional bodies.

66. The Permanent Forum urges Member States to pay special attention to indigenous peoples residing in cross-border areas, in accordance with article 36 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and invites academia, in consultation with the Permanent Forum, to convene a conference on indigenous peoples divided by international borders. The Forum invites the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to initiate a general comment on the collective rights of indigenous peoples to lands, territories and natural resources.

67. The Permanent Forum urges the Governments of Colombia and Ecuador to take immediate action to protect the indigenous peoples whose territories are in the border area between the two countries. The Forum encourages the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples to work with the two Governments to address this situation in close cooperation with the indigenous communities concerned.

68. The Permanent Forum reiterates its call to Member States to establish mechanisms and processes for comprehensive dialogue and consultations with indigenous peoples in order to obtain their free, prior and informed consent in relation to any project that will have an impact on their territories and resources. In this regard, the Forum expresses concern regarding the lack of consultation by the Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia with the indigenous peoples who will be affected

by the mega-hydroelectric project of El Bala-Chepete and Rositas, including the Guarani, Mosetén, Tacana, Tsimané, Leco, Ese Ejja and Uchupiamona peoples. The Forum urges the Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to respect the fundamental rights of indigenous peoples and ensure that they are able to exercise their rights in accordance with international human rights standards.

69. Recalling the recommendations made by the Special Rapporteur appointed to undertake a study on the status of implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord of 1997 (E/C.19/2011/6, sect. VIII), the Forum encourages the Government of Bangladesh:

(a) To set a time frame for the full implementation of the Accord, including devolution of authority to the Chittagong Hill Tracts Regional Council and three Hill District Councils;

(b) To adopt the rules of business for the Chittagong Hill Tracts Land Commission and allocate sufficient human and financial resources for the Commission.

Follow-up to the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples

70. The Permanent Forum regrets that the General Assembly did not establish a new category of participation for indigenous peoples. Nevertheless, the Forum acknowledges the progress made in the implementation of the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples and recognizes the need to further advance the priorities clearly set out by indigenous peoples in the Alta outcome document.

71. The Permanent Forum acknowledges the ongoing consultation process to enhance the participation of indigenous peoples at the United Nations under the leadership of the President of the General Assembly and takes note of Assembly resolution 71/321, which lays out a process for continuing the consideration of the participation of indigenous peoples at the United Nations.

72. The Permanent Forum welcomes the process of the President of the General Assembly of organizing and presiding over informal interactive hearings during the seventy-second, seventy-third and seventy-fourth sessions of the Assembly, on the margins of the sessions of the Forum, to enhance the participation of representatives and institutions of indigenous peoples in meetings of relevant United Nations bodies on issues affecting them, as requested by the General Assembly in its resolution 71/321.

73. The Permanent Forum urges the Secretary-General to convene, in consultation with the Forum and before its eighteenth session, regional consultations in each of the seven indigenous regions to discuss the modalities for the participation of indigenous people at the United Nations, including how the participation of indigenous representatives can be enhanced. The Forum urges Member States to support the organization of these regional consultations.

74. The Permanent Forum, recognizing that indigenous peoples can contribute greatly a range of issues on the international agenda, encourages the President of the General Assembly to consider inviting representatives of indigenous peoples to other hearings and events.

75. The Permanent Forum appreciates the efforts made by El Salvador, Guatemala and Paraguay to develop national action plans in consultation with indigenous peoples and encourages them to share best practices. It further encourages Member States to continue to effectively engage with indigenous peoples at the national, local and

community levels to develop and implement national action plans, strategies or other measures to achieve the ends of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

76. The Permanent Forum welcomes the work done by the United Nations system to implement the United Nations system-wide action plan on the rights of indigenous peoples and encourages United Nations country teams to facilitate dialogue between Member States and indigenous peoples towards the development of national action plans and other measures and to report to the Forum at its eighteenth session on progress made.

77. The Permanent Forum welcomes the Ibero-American Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, adopted in April 2018 by indigenous peoples and States as members of the Fund for the Development of Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean. The Forum encourages the Fund to share its experiences in other regions of the world.

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

78. The 2030 Agenda is now in its third year of implementation. The Permanent Forum reiterates that countries undergoing voluntary national reviews at the high-level political forum on sustainable development should include indigenous peoples in their reviews, reports and delegations and invites States to report on good practices to the Forum at its eighteenth session.

79. Further, the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal on ensuring access to affordable and modern energy for all (Goal 7) is posing threats as well as providing opportunities for indigenous peoples. The Permanent Forum encourages States to work with indigenous peoples to develop guidelines for responsible renewable energy development.

Dialogues with indigenous peoples, Member States and the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system

80. The Permanent Forum conducted three focused, interactive dialogue sessions with indigenous peoples, Member States and the funds, programmes and specialized agencies of the United Nations system. Such dialogues provide an opportunity to focus on specific issues and identify ways to increase the effectiveness of the work of the Forum. The Forum finds these dialogues to be of great value and will continue to conduct them at future sessions.

81. The dialogues included discussions on the criminalization of the actions of indigenous human rights defenders; the lack of consultations to obtain the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples; the need for effective engagement of indigenous peoples in the 2030 Agenda; violence and discrimination against indigenous women, children, youth, older persons and persons with disabilities; and the urgent need to revitalize indigenous languages.

82. The members of the Forum extend their deepest condolences to the family of Colten Boushie and express heartfelt gratitude for their presence at the Forum session.

83. The Permanent Forum congratulates the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) for its ongoing work with indigenous peoples, including the operationalization of free, prior and informed consent in its funded projects, support for national policy dialogues among indigenous peoples, governments and United Nations country teams and adoption of data disaggregation for indigenous peoples in its revised Results and Impact Management System.[3] The Forum encourages the Fund

[3] Available from https://webapps.ifad.org/members/ec/96/docs/EC-2017-96-W-P-7.pdf

to develop specific indicators on the well-being of indigenous peoples, to be applied in its funded projects. The Forum urges IFAD to ensure that its high standards and safeguards are applied to its co-funded projects initiated by institutions that invest in large infrastructure.

84. The Permanent Forum requests that entities, agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system allocate relevant financial and human resources to carry out commitments to indigenous peoples, as per the system-wide action plan on the rights of indigenous peoples and respective strategic plans and programmes and to provide information to the Forum about the allocation of such resources at its annual sessions.

85. The Permanent Forum welcomes the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) strategy of inclusion and visibility of indigenous women, which responds to the system-wide action plan on the rights of indigenous peoples and the recommendation of the Forum (E/2014/43/Corr.1-E/C.19/2014/11/Corr.1, para. 35) on including the priorities of indigenous women in global, regional and national programmes. The Forum encourages Member States to allocate sufficient funding for the implementation of the strategy. The Forum encourages UN-Women to emphasize enhancing the participation and capacities of indigenous young women and girls and to report on progress made to the Forum at its eighteenth session.

86. The Permanent Forum reiterates its previous recommendations to UNICEF to adopt a policy on indigenous peoples in consultation with indigenous peoples without delay.

Regional dialogues with indigenous peoples and Member States

87. In an effort to increase the effectiveness of its work and to engage in deeper dialogue on issues of concern to indigenous peoples in the different regions, the Permanent Forum held six regional dialogues between the Forum, indigenous peoples and Member States. Forum members, as well as indigenous participants and States, expressed support for the initiative, which the Forum intends to continue in future sessions.

88. The dialogues provided an opportunity to discuss the main challenges and opportunities related to advancing the rights of indigenous peoples in the region. There was agreement upon the need to strengthen regional spaces for coordination and to link regional processes and the priorities of indigenous peoples with the ongoing global processes.

Africa

89. Indigenous peoples requested that Member States and the United Nations system financially support a multi-stakeholder regional consultation process for indigenous peoples' organizations (in the form of an African regional peoples' fund) to share knowledge and best practices and develop a road map of common issues for indigenous peoples in Africa.

90. Participants urged indigenous peoples, Member States, UNESCO and other United Nations agencies, programmes and funds and other relevant actors to promote the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages at the African regional and subregional level.

Arctic, Eastern Europe, Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia

91. The Permanent Forum reiterates its recommendation from 2015 to the Arctic Council and requests all Arctic governments to adopt a comprehensive and long-term

strategy for resource extraction in the Arctic region that includes free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples to development projects on their lands and territories or involving their resources. The Forum requests the Arctic Council to provide information on the progress made in the implementation of the recommendation in conjunction with indigenous peoples.

92. The Permanent Forum appeals to governments in the Arctic, Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia to give financial and political support to their indigenous peoples to play an active role in the implementation of the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages, including for indigenous peoples and experts to meet at conferences and other relevant regional meetings and events.

93. Recalling paragraph 40 of its report on its sixteenth session (E/2017/43-E/C.19/2017/11), the Permanent Forum calls on Governments in the Arctic, Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia, along with academics, to take appropriate measures to introduce the endangered languages of their regions into educational practices and include the learning of those languages in curricula at all levels of educational system, when requested by indigenous people.

94. The Permanent Forum urges Governments in the Arctic, Eastern Europe, the Russian Federation, Central Asia and Transcaucasia to fully implement the relevant international obligations related to environmental and social safeguards to assure the conservation of nature and access to natural resources for indigenous peoples within their territories in accordance with Sustainable Development Goals 12, 14 and 15.

Asia

95. The Permanent Forum expresses appreciation for Nepal being the only Asian country to ratify the Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), in 2007. Nevertheless, it is concerning that, even 10 years after ratification, the Government has not adopted a national action plan to implement the Convention. The Forum recommends that Nepal immediately adopt a national action plan, including in line with its commitment in the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. The Forum urges other Asian States to consider ratifying the Convention as per the recommendations made by treaty bodies and in the universal periodic review.

96. The Permanent Forum recalls and stresses its earlier recommendation that the Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) recognize the human rights of indigenous peoples in the ASEAN region and establish a working group on indigenous peoples. In addition, the Forum urges the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation to establish a human rights commission and a working group on indigenous peoples.

97. The Permanent Forum invites the Economic and Social Council to further enhance the participation of national human rights institutions compliant with the Paris principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in the sessions of the Forum and to allow for their contribution to the sessions, bearing in mind the relevant provisions dealing with their participation contained in General Assembly resolution 60/251 of 15 March 2006, Human Rights Council resolutions 5/1, 5/2 and 16/21 and Commission on Human Rights resolution 2005/74.[4]

[4] See General Assembly resolution 72/181, para. 16.

Pacific

98. The loss of capacity to maintain subsistence livelihoods of island populations in the region leads to social stress and disadvantage, including substance abuse and domestic violence. The remote locations of many islands of the region can result in poor or limited access to health and education institutions, as well as transport and communications.

99. The Permanent Forum expresses concern at the high numbers of imprisoned indigenous people in the Pacific region, including in Australia, New Zealand and Hawaii, United States.

100. The Pacific is the region that is most vulnerable to climate change. Indigenous peoples can contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and act as stewards of their traditional lands, yet they receive little attention from their Governments and the global community. While most small island developing States in the region support the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and are implementing Agenda 2030, progress in the Pacific is lagging far behind.

Central and South America and the Caribbean

101. The main concerns expressed in this dialogue included the implementation gap between the progress made in institutional, legislative and policy frameworks within the region and the effective measures taken by the Governments; the criminalization of protest and the persecution and killings of defenders of the collective rights of indigenous peoples; the lack of consultations to obtain the free, prior and informed consent of indigenous peoples, especially in the context of disputes over land rights, the expansion of extractive industries and agroindustry; and the alarming levels of violence against indigenous women, youth and children, including sexual abuse of indigenous children in educational contexts and increased femicide in the region.

102. The 2030 Agenda and the upcoming 2020 census round, as well as the International Year of Indigenous Languages, are opportunities to achieve progress on the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. These processes must guarantee the full and effective participation of indigenous peoples at all levels. The Permanent Forum recognizes the need to enhance the participation of the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean, including indigenous women and youth.

North America

103. The Permanent Forum welcomes the constructive dialogue between the indigenous peoples and Member States in North America on border-crossing issues (honouring the Jay Treaty, the North American Free Trade Agreement and cross-border pipelines), the designation of 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages and the creation of space for indigenous youth to participate in the processes of the Forum. The Forum notes the recent second meeting of the North American Working Group on Violence Against Indigenous Women and Girls and encourages Canada, Mexico and the United States to develop a trilateral initiative on transboundary issues of concern to indigenous peoples.

104. Indigenous peoples expressed concern over the development projects and disrespect by corporations of indigenous lands, territories and resources in their development and implementation of extraction projects connected to the Sustainable Development Goals, including in the insular territories of indigenous peoples.

105. The Permanent Forum encourages States to directly reference and incorporate into their negotiation policies and frameworks for treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements the implementation of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and mechanisms for free, prior and informed consent.

Future work of the Permanent Forum, including issues considered by the Economic and Social Council and emerging issues

106. The Permanent Forum welcomes publication of *Local Biodiversity Outlooks*, as a collaborative effort of the International Indigenous Forum on Biodiversity, the Forest Peoples Programme and the secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and looks forward to its second edition, to be published in 2020.

107. The Permanent Forum supports the strengthening and further application of community-based mapping, monitoring and information systems as complementary evidence bases for assessment and monitoring of the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the post-2020 biodiversity framework, and as tools for community governance and self-determined development.

108. The Permanent Forum urges Governments and donors to support community-based monitoring and information systems, citizen science and the democratization of information technologies, as complementary to national and global statistical and information systems, and to prioritize capacity-building and funding and for such initiatives.

109. The Permanent Forum welcomes the approval of the approach to recognizing and working with indigenous and local knowledge adopted at the fifth plenary of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, in 2017, and the establishment of a participatory mechanism for indigenous peoples and local communities in the work of the Platform. The Forum urges the identification of procedures and methodologies for effective implementation of the approach and the participatory mechanism, in partnership with indigenous peoples.

110. The Permanent Forum congratulates the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) for its work to assist indigenous peoples and States in the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security, and for the issuance of a technical guide on commons and communal lands and resources. The Forum encourages FAO to continue enhancing the implementation of the Voluntary Guidelines with tailored capacity development for indigenous peoples.

111. The Permanent Forum recommends that FAO create a technical working group on the collective rights of indigenous peoples to lands, territories and resources, which will provide technical outputs and publications informing indigenous peoples and the Forum.

112. The Permanent Forum requests FAO to enhance the participation of indigenous peoples and representatives from the Forum in the work of the Committee on Agriculture, the Committee on Forestry, the Committee on Fisheries, the Committee on World Food Security and the Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.

113. The Permanent Forum welcomes the adoption by the Green Climate Fund of the Indigenous Peoples Policy and the Environmental and Social Policy, as well as the establishment of the Indigenous Peoples Advisory Group by the Fund, and encourages the Fund to support specific capacity-building programmes for indigenous peoples as part of the readiness and preparatory programme to ensure their full and effective engagement with the Fund at all levels and in all activities.

114. The Permanent Forum appoints Brian Keane and Elifuraha Laltaika, members of the Forum, to conduct a study on the implementation of judicial decisions related to indigenous peoples and to present that study at to the Forum at its eighteenth session, in 2019.

115. The Permanent Forum appoints Mariam Wallet Mohamed Aboubakrine, member of the Forum, to conduct a study on tuberculosis and indigenous peoples and to present that study to the Forum at its eighteenth session, in 2019.

116. The Permanent Forum appoints Terri Henry, member of the Forum, to conduct a study on the representative institutions of indigenous peoples and their relationship with national and local governments, and to present that study to the Forum at its eighteenth session, in 2019.

117. The Permanent Forum expresses its appreciation to the Government of the Plurinational State of Bolivia and organizations of indigenous peoples for the support provided to hold the pre-sessional meeting for the eighteenth session of the Forum in Sucre from 25 February to 2 March 2018. The Forum calls upon States to propose and host the preliminary sessions of the Forum in the future.

Chapter II
Venue, dates and proceedings of the session

118. By its decision 2017/248, the Economic and Social Council decided that the seventeenth session of the Permanent Forum would be held at United Nations Headquarters from 16 to 27 April 2018.

119. At its 2nd meeting, on 16 April, the Permanent Forum considered agenda item 3, entitled "Follow-up to the recommendations of the Permanent Forum". For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it two notes by the Secretariat entitled "Compilation of information received from United Nations system entities and other intergovernmental bodies on progress in the implementation of the recommendations of the Permanent Forum" (E/C.19/2018/3) and "Compilation of information received from indigenous peoples' organizations" (E/C.19/2018/4).

120. At its 2nd meeting, on 16 April, and its 7th and 8th meetings, on 19 April, the Forum considered agenda item 4, entitled "Implementation of the six mandated areas of the Permanent Forum with reference to the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples". For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it two notes by the Secretariat entitled "Compilation of information from national human rights institutions" (E/C.19/2018/6) and "Action plan for organizing the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages" (E/C.19/2018/8). At its 15th meeting, on 27 April, the Forum considered and adopted its recommendations submitted under that item (see chap. I, sect. B).

121. At its 10th meeting, on 20 April, the Forum considered agenda item 5, entitled "Dialogue with indigenous peoples". At its 15th meeting, the Forum considered and adopted its recommendations submitted under that item (see chap. I, sect. B).

122. At its 12th meeting, on 23 April, the Forum considered agenda item 6, entitled "Dialogue with Member States". At its 15th meeting, the Forum considered and adopted its recommendations submitted under that item (see chap. I, sect. B).

123. At its 11th meeting, on 23 April, the Forum considered agenda item 7, entitled "Dialogue with the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system". At its 15th meeting, the Forum considered and adopted its recommendations submitted under that item (see chap. I, sect. B).

124. At its 3rd, 4th and 8th meetings, on 17 and 19 April, the Forum considered agenda item 8, entitled "Discussion on the theme 'Indigenous peoples' collective rights to lands, territories and resources'". For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it two notes by the Secretariat entitled "Indigenous peoples' collective rights to lands, territories and resources" (E/C.19/2018/5) and "International expert group meeting on the theme 'Sustainable development in the territories of indigenous peoples'" (E/C.19/2018/7). At its 15th meeting, the Forum considered and adopted its recommendations submitted under that item (see chap. I, sects. A and B).

125. At its 4th meeting, on 17 April, the Forum considered agenda item 9, entitled "2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it a note by the Secretariat entitled "Update on indigenous peoples and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (E/C.19/2018/2). At its 15th meeting, the Forum considered and adopted its recommendations submitted under that item (see chap. I, sect. B).

126. At its 5th and 6th meetings, on 18 April, the Forum considered agenda item 10, entitled "Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the rights of indigenous peoples and the Chair of the Expert Mechanism on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples". At its

15th meeting, the Forum considered and adopted its recommendations submitted under that item (see chap. I, sect. B).

127. At its 9th meeting, on 20 April, the Forum considered agenda item 11, entitled "Follow-up to the outcome document of the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples". At its 15th meeting, the Forum considered and adopted its recommendations submitted under that item (see chap. I, sect. B).

128. At its 8th meeting, on 19 April, the Forum considered agenda item 12, entitled "Future work of the Permanent Forum, including issues considered by the Economic and Social Council and emerging issues". For its consideration of the item, the Forum had before it a note by the Secretariat entitled "Study to examine conservation and indigenous peoples' human rights" (E/C.19/2018/9). At its 15th meeting, the Forum considered and adopted its recommendations submitted under that item (see chap. I, sect. B).

129. At its 15th meeting, the Forum considered agenda item 13, entitled "Provisional agenda for the eighteenth session". At the same meeting, the Forum considered and adopted a draft decision submitted under that item (see chap. I, sect. A).

Chapter III

Adoption of the report of the Permanent Forum on its seventeenth session

130. At its 15th meeting, on 27 April, the Rapporteur introduced and orally revised the draft decisions and recommendations and the draft report of the Permanent Forum on its seventeenth session.

131. At the same meeting, the Permanent Forum adopted its draft report, as orally revised.

Chapter IV
Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

132. The Permanent Forum held its seventeenth session at United Nations Headquarters from 16 to 27 April 2018. It held 15 formal meetings, including 5 closed meetings, to consider the items on its agenda.

133. At the 1st meeting, on 16 April, the session was opened by the Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development. At the opening ceremony, a representative of the Onondaga Nation, Tadodaho Sid Hill, delivered a welcoming address. The President of the General Assembly and the Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines) delivered statements.

134. At the same meeting, the President of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, Evo Morales Ayma, addressed the Forum. Statements were also made by the Chair of the Forum and the Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Development.

B. Attendance

135. Members of the Permanent Forum and representatives of Governments, intergovernmental organizations and bodies, United Nations entities and non-governmental and indigenous organizations attended the session. The list of participants will be published at a later date.

C. Election of officers

136. At its 1st meeting, on 16 April, the Forum elected the following members of the Bureau by acclamation:

Chair:
Mariam Wallet Mohamed Aboubakrine

Vice-Chairs:
Anne Nuorgam
Zhang Xiaoan
Dmitrii Kharakka-Zaitsev
Tarcila Rivera Zea

Rapporteur:
Brian Keane

D. Agenda

137. Also at its 1st meeting, the Forum adopted the provisional agenda contained in document E/C.19/2018/1.

E. Documentation

138. The list of the documents before the Permanent Forum at its seventeenth session will be published at a later date.

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United Nations

Committee of Experts on Public Administration

Report on the seventeenth session (23–27 April 2018)

Economic and Social Council
Official Records, 2018
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Summary

The present report contains the main findings and recommendations of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration at its seventeenth session. The Committee addressed three overarching issues from a variety of perspectives, namely: readying institutions and policies for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels; and enhancing and equipping institutions to support the transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies.

A key message of the session was that institutions played a critical role in the achievement of all the Sustainable Development Goals and targets and that a wide range of pragmatic ongoing improvements in national and local governance capabilities could yield important long-term results. Building on the work of the sixteenth session, the Committee agreed on a set of principles of effective governance for sustainable development that could serve as an important reference point in building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels and in support of the implementation of all the Goals.

The Committee stressed that the indivisibility and the urgency of the Goals made policy and institutional coherence a priority. It suggested three pathways to improve coherence. First, institutional and policy coherence should be promoted together and should be context-sensitive and inclusive. Second, the promotion of coherence requires structural attention and coordination and a broad range of tools and might need specific work programmes or reforms. Third, there is scope for a global peer-to-peer learning mechanism to support the necessary change of structures, processes, skills and mindsets and to promote mutual learning, networking and knowledge exchange by all relevant stakeholders. In addition, national public administration schools and other training institutions should integrate the promotion of coherence for the Goals in their curricula.

Sound budgetary performance and transparent reporting are also areas of concern. Building competent public fiscal management capacity at the national and local levels together with adequate oversight capacity is a major challenge. The Goals should be mainstreamed into national finance strategies to bridge the gap between policy priorities and actual government spending and, in the least developed countries, to ensure that the achievement of sustainable development does not depend on aid alone. Timely and regular production, publication and wide dissemination of executive budget proposals, enacted budgets and other budget reports should be considered, along with citizen budget guides that are simple to understand and accessible. Also important are effective participatory budgeting and the formulation of indicators to monitor progress.

The Committee observed that efforts to rally civil servants and the broader public sector workforce around the Goals and instil a sense of commitment could be strengthened, along with new ways of working based on participation and engagement. New policy and technical skills will be required in the public sector, given the high rate of scientific and technological advancement and the service delivery and policy complexities associated with the Goals.

To help to address misconduct and corruption in the public sector, Governments are encouraged to adopt and enforce comprehensive legislation on whistle-blower protection that takes a broad approach to the protection of reporting persons, and to strengthen efforts to put whistle-blower protection into practice.

Taking the observations above into account, the Committee adopted a draft resolution and a draft decision for the consideration of the Economic and Social Council.

The Committee also prepared a contribution to the 2018 high-level political forum on sustainable development on the subject of challenges for institutions in the transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies.

[11 May 2018]

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Chapter I

Matters calling for action by the Economic and Social Council or brought to its attention

A. Draft resolution recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council

1. The Committee of Experts on Public Administration recommends that the Economic and Social Council review and adopt the following draft resolution:

Report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its seventeenth session

The Economic and Social Council,

Recalling its resolutions 2016/26 of 27 July 2016 and 2017/23 of 7 July 2017 and other related resolutions on public administration and development, in which it affirmed that service to citizens should be at the centre of transforming public administration and that the foundations of sustainable development at all levels include transparent, participatory and accountable governance and a professional, ethical, responsive and information and communications technology-enabled public administration,

Reaffirming General Assembly resolution 70/1 of 25 September 2015, entitled "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development",

Reaffirming also General Assembly resolution 69/313 of 27 July 2015 on the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development,

Reaffirming further the outcome document, entitled "New Urban Agenda", adopted by the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), held in Quito from 17 to 20 October 2016,[1]

Recalling General Assembly resolution 69/327 of 14 September 2015, in which the Assembly reaffirmed the importance of freedom, human rights, national sovereignty, good governance, the rule of law, peace and security, combating corruption at all levels and in all its forms, and effective, accountable and inclusive democratic institutions at the subnational, national and international levels as central to enabling inclusive and accountable public services for sustainable development,

Referring to the United Nations Convention against Corruption,[2] which entered into force on 14 December 2005,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 72/200 of 20 December 2017, in which the Assembly recognized the need to harness the potential of information and communications technologies as critical enablers of sustainable development and to overcome the digital divides, and stressing that capacity-building for the productive use of such technologies should be given due consideration in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda,

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[1] General Assembly resolution 71/256, annex.

[2] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 2349, No. 42146.

Recalling also General Assembly resolution 69/228 of 19 December 2014 on promoting and fostering the efficiency, accountability, effectiveness and transparency of public administration by strengthening supreme audit institutions, in which the Assembly emphasized that efficient, accountable and transparent public administration has a key role to play in the implementation of the internationally agreed development goals,

Recognizing the role of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration in providing policy advice and programmatic guidance to the Economic and Social Council on issues related to governance and public administration, and the relevance of the work of the Committee to the implementation of and follow-up to the 2030 Agenda,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration on its seventeenth session,[3] and expresses its appreciation for the work done by the Committee on readying institutions and policies for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,[4] including on implications for public institutions of strategies for integrated action to achieve sustainable and resilient societies in accordance with the 2018 themes of the Economic and Social Council and the high-level political forum on sustainable development;

2. *Invites* the Committee to continue to place the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at the centre of its work and to continue to advise the Council on how public administrations can support the implementation and progress reviews of the Sustainable Development Goals;

3. *Welcomes* the contribution of the Committee to the high-level political forum, and reaffirms that the principle of leaving no one behind should be a core principle of public administration;

Promoting policy and institutional coherence in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals

4. *Recognizes* the critical role of institutions in the achievement of all the Sustainable Development Goals and targets, calls for institutions to develop more creative, flexible and integrated ways of working to this end, and notes that implementing the Goals does not necessarily require the creation of new institutions;

5. *Reiterates* the importance of the sectoral ministries in developing and implementing policies in their respective areas, taking into account the interrelationships inherent in the Sustainable Development Goals, underscores that it may be useful to invite such ministries to identify the Goals and targets that they will address most specifically and adjust or develop related implementation plans or strategies in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders, and recognizes the role of ministries of finance in enabling and accelerating the implementation of the Goals;

6. *Notes* that, in order to achieve greater policy and institutional coherence, various approaches will be needed, such as integration, coordination, alignment, multilevel governance, compatibility, reconciliation, capacity-building, empowerment and public sector reform, and that civil society and the private sector are crucial partners in this endeavour;

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[3] *Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 2018, Supplement No. 24* (E/2018/44).

[4] General Assembly resolution 70/1.

7. *Recognizes* that promoting coherence requires using tools and mechanisms from hierarchical, network and market styles of governance in ways that are both compatible with national and organizational contexts and as innovative as possible;

8. *Invites* Governments and other organizations to stimulate peer-to-peer coaching and learning so as to promote policy and institutional coherence for the Sustainable Development Goals, inter alia by establishing a global network of practitioners responsible for promoting coherence at the national and subnational levels, and to include policy and institutional coherence in the curricula of public administration schools and other training institutions;

9. *Notes* that adequate analytical, operational and political capacity are all needed in public institutions to achieve policy coherence, and that policy and institutional coherence could be embedded in performance management systems of the public sector;

Elaborating principles of effective governance for sustainable development

10. *Reaffirms* the need for pragmatic ongoing improvements in national and local governance capabilities to achieve the 2030 Agenda and other international agreements, and endorses the principles of effective governance for sustainable development contained in the report of the Committee as an initial reference point in building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels and in support of the implementation of all Sustainable Development Goals;

11. *Encourages* the Committee to continue to identify and review related technical guidelines to operationalize the principles, following a well-defined process for assessing the relevance of a practice to the principles and the evidence of impact, including from sectoral perspectives, and to engage the relevant United Nations organizations, regional organizations and professional and academic communities in this regard;

Effectively mobilizing, allocating and managing budgetary resources

12. *Recognizes* the essential role of governments and public institutions at all levels, and all other relevant stakeholders, in effectively mobilizing, allocating and managing budgetary resources for implementation of the 2030 Agenda through appropriate laws, policies and strategies;

13. *Also recognizes* that fiscal sustainability and proper public financial management are essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and that the sustainability of public finance does not depend on the sum of government expenditure or the size of the State but on the structure and efficacy of the public sector;

14. *Notes* that trust-building has an integral place in budgeting processes and in promoting an effective legal and regulatory framework and a monitoring and accountability framework with participation, engagement and risk management, and that participatory budgeting at the local level in particular can help to build public trust and facilitate social cohesion;

15. *Also notes* that the increased transparency and enhanced openness of public data related to both revenues and expenditure allocation have resulted in better-informed citizens and increased awareness of how the contribution of taxes is beneficial to society, and encourages governments at all levels to publish public financial data in a timely and comprehensive manner, including through open government data;

16. *Notes with concern* the prevalence of ineffective tax systems, tax evasion, profit shifting, treaty abuse and illicit financial flows, and encourages Governments to strengthen efforts to promote efficient and fair tax systems, inter alia by improving the management of tax collection processes through the use of information and communications technology, data analytics and artificial intelligence;

17. *Stresses* the critical role of the audit function in public financial management, and encourages governments at all levels to strengthen related capacity-building and to enhance the use of tools such as cost accounting and performance audit in public financial management;

Building the awareness, competencies and skills of civil servants

18. *Stresses* that leadership at all levels of government and public administration is critical for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, and welcomes the fact that, in some countries, the highest level of government has engaged or remains engaged in the implementation of the Goals;

19. *Invites* Governments to launch initiatives to raise the awareness and commitment of civil servants at all levels to the 2030 Agenda and encourages them to take leadership roles, innovate and break away from business as usual, inter alia, to address the integrated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals, and also invites Governments to build the capacities and skills of civil servants in areas such as integrated and coherent policymaking, planning, implementation, foresight, consultation, evidence-based reviews of progress, the collection and use of statistics and data and engagement with non-State actors;

20. *Stresses* the need to provide adequate investment in training in all countries, particularly in developing countries, to expand access to skills that can boost public sector capacity and productivity and to attract people with those skill sets to the public sector workforce, particularly given the high rate of scientific and technological advancement as well as the service delivery and policy complexities associated with the Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets;

21. *Recognizes* that the use of new technologies and the promotion of innovation in the public sector should be accompanied by regulatory frameworks that can guide Governments and reduce the risk of adverse effects of technology and innovation;

22. *Encourages* Governments to ensure respect for the rule of law, professional integrity and effective and fair human resources management;

Participation and engagement in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and contributing to progress

23. *Underscores* that there is no single blueprint for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and that identifying the most effective policies in a given context requires the participation and engagement of all stakeholders, inter alia, local authorities, civil society and the private sector, on various policy options;

24. *Invites* Member States, therefore, to ensure that policies to implement the Sustainable Development Goals are developed in a participatory, inclusive and collaborative fashion, noting that it is important to institutionalize participation and engagement so as to ensure that various parts of civil society have an opportunity to make their voices heard, and recognizes the particular challenges that governments at all levels may face in this regard in fragile and conflict-affected settings;

25. *Underscores* that implementing the Sustainable Development Goals requires the actions of not only Governments but also multiple actors of civil society

and the private sector and the launching of effective partnerships, inter alia in monitoring implementation;

26. *Stresses* that awareness and ownership of the Sustainable Development Goals by institutions at all levels and by society at large are essential to promoting their implementation, and invites Governments to undertake concerted efforts to raise awareness and increase ownership of the Goals within national, regional and local authorities, civil society, the private sector and society at large;

Strengthening whistle-blower protection

27. *Encourages* governments at all levels to adopt and enforce comprehensive legislation on whistle-blower protection that takes a broad approach to the protection of reporting persons, and to strengthen efforts to put whistle-blower protection into practice through, inter alia, public education, as well as standardized procedures and guidance, building on the findings of the Mechanism for the Review of Implementation of the United Nations Convention against Corruption and the exchange of good practices in corruption prevention, including on whistle-blowing systems and procedures;

Enhancing and equipping institutions in urban and rural communities

28. *Stresses* that the transformation of societies in urban and rural communities is characterized by growing urban populations and an increase in the number of migrants, youth and older persons in many areas, and urges governments at all levels to consider the impact of demographic changes on urban governance, municipal finance and local finance systems, local capacity for the prevention of, adaptation to and the mitigation of external shocks and the capacity of local authorities to ensure access for all people to public services;

29. *Emphasizes* that, regardless of the model or the extent of decentralization in a country, both the central and local governments have a responsibility for realizing the Sustainable Development Goals, and that it is critical that they work together in a spirit of collaboration and partnership;

30. *Affirms* that the resources and capacities of local governments should be commensurate with their responsibilities, and therefore notes that responsibility for the implementation of specific Sustainable Development Goals and targets should be transferred to the local level, accompanied by an adequate level of financial resources and capacity development;

31. *Recognizes* the transformative power of information and communications technology, and welcomes the fact that Governments are increasingly using such technology to deliver public services and other functions and engage people in decision-making, while noting that many forms of the digital divide remain;

Follow-up

32. *Requests* the Committee, at its eighteenth session, to be held from 8 to 12 April 2019, to examine and make recommendations on the theme of the 2019 session of the Council;

33. *Invites* the Committee to contribute to the thematic review of the high-level political forum and to work towards contributing to the overall review of the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals to be conducted by the high-level political forum in 2019, giving particular attention to the cross-cutting nature of all the Goals;

34. *Also invites* the Committee to continue to advise on approaches and practices related to the institutions, policies and arrangements being established to promote the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, bearing in mind that the specific contexts and situations of countries differ widely, as well as to advise on making institutions effective, inclusive and accountable;

35. *Requests* the Secretary-General to take the present resolution fully into account in the work of the Organization, inter alia, in addressing gaps in research and analysis and in responding to the capacity development needs of Member States for building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels in pursuit of the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals;

36. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to continue to promote and support innovation and excellence in public services for sustainable development through the United Nations Public Service Awards;

37. *Further requests* the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of and follow-up to the present resolution through the established working methods of the Committee.

B. Draft decision recommended for adoption by the Economic and Social Council

2. Bearing in mind the themes of the 2019 session of the Economic and Social Council and of the 2019 high-level political forum on sustainable development, the Committee of Experts on Public Administration recommends that the Council review and adopt the following draft decision:

Dates and provisional agenda of the eighteenth session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration

The Economic and Social Council:

(a) Decides that the eighteenth session of the Committee of Experts on Public Administration will be held at United Nations Headquarters from 8 to 12 April 2019;

(b) Approves the provisional agenda for the eighteenth session of the Committee as set out below:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Enhancing the capacity of the public sector in core functional areas of administration.
4. Governance and public administration aspects of empowering people to build equal and inclusive societies for the twenty-first century.
5. Relating the principles of effective governance for sustainable development to practices and results.
6. Building institutions to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and provide access to justice for all.
7. Strengthening fiscal management at the national and subnational levels.
8. Stocktaking of progress on Sustainable Development Goal 16.
9. Provisional agenda for the nineteenth session of the Committee.

10. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its eighteenth session.

(c) Decides that documentation in support of the provisional agenda should continue to be prepared through the established working methods of the Committee.

C. Contribution of the Committee to the high-level political forum on sustainable development on challenges for institutions in the transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies

3. The Committee would like to draw the attention of the Economic and Social Council to its contribution to the 2018 high-level political forum on sustainable development on the subject of transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies. In its contribution, conveyed to the President of the Council as Chair of the high-level political forum on 2 May 2018, the Committee underlined, inter alia, that future-oriented strategies and actions could increase the likelihood of building and maintaining resilient societies and realizing sustainable development, and ensuring that the poorest and the most vulnerable are able to access and benefit from public goods and services.

4. To that end, the Committee emphasized that the principles of effective governance for sustainable development agreed at the seventeenth session could be linked with global efforts to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals by reflecting them in ongoing capacity development activities and assessing relevant technical standards for alignment with the principle of leaving no one behind. Policy and institutional coherence should be made a priority to overcome the challenges of fragmentation and silo thinking that hamper the implementation of the Goals. In addition, building competent public fiscal management capacity at the national and local levels together with adequate oversight remains a major challenge for public administration that should be addressed.

5. To accelerate progress in establishing sustainable and resilient societies, the Committee thus recommended:

(a) Adopting and operationalizing the principles of effective governance for sustainable development and undertaking related strategic actions that are known to be effective, in line with each country's unique needs and aspirations;

(b) Adopting the principle of leaving no one behind as a core principle of public administration, and ensuring that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality, by taking into account the needs and aspirations of all segments of society, including the poorest and most vulnerable and those subject to discrimination, in public policies at all levels;

(c) Introducing clear and comprehensive legal frameworks, policies, strategies and services that focus on empowering the poorest and most vulnerable, and marshalling financial resources towards that end;

(d) Addressing violence and insecurity as a matter of priority, since the absence of peace can otherwise throw healthy and prosperous communities into abject poverty and helplessness;

(e) Strengthening local governments, authorities and communities as integral actors of sustainable development in service delivery, infrastructure development, local resource mobilization and institutional and human resource capacity development;

(f) Fostering lifelong learning cultures and supporting tailor-made and comprehensive capacity development in the public sector, and strengthening the institutions promoting such learning culture and capacity development.

Chapter II
Organization of the session

A. Opening and duration of the session

6. The Committee of Experts on Public Administration, established by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 2001/45, consists of 24 experts appointed in their personal capacity by the Council upon the nomination of the Secretary-General. The Committee held its seventeenth session at United Nations Headquarters from 23 to 27 April 2018.

7. The Officer-in-Charge of the Division for Public Administration and Development Management, Stefan Schweinfest, called the session to order and welcomed the participants. The Vice-President of the Economic and Social Council, Jerry Matthews Matjila, and the Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs, Liu Zhenmin, made opening remarks. The Committee considered all items on the agenda of the seventeenth session and concluded by adopting the draft report.

B. Attendance

8. The following 22 Committee members attended the session: Linda Bilmes (United States of America), Geert Bouckaert (Belgium), Upma Chawdhry (India), Emmanuelle d'Achon (France), Cristina Duarte (Cabo Verde), Geraldine J. Fraser-Moleketi (South Africa), Paul Jackson (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), Bridget Katsriku (Ghana), Margaret Kobia (Kenya), Ma Hezu (China), Louis Meuleman (Netherlands), Joan Mendez (Trinidad and Tobago), Linus Toussaint Mendjana (Cameroon), Gregorio Montero (Dominican Republic), Lamia Moubayed Bissat (Lebanon), Juraj Nemec (Slovakia), Katarina Ott (Croatia), Regina Silvia Pacheco (Brazil), Moni Pizani (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela), Ora-orn Poocharoen (Thailand), Gowher Rizvi (Bangladesh) and Abdelhak Saihi (Algeria).

9. The following entities of the United Nations system were represented at the session: Economic Commission for Africa, Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Human Settlements Programme, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, United Nations University, International Labour Office and International Civil Service Commission.

10. Observers from governmental, non-governmental and related organizations also attended. Observers were invited to provide written statements in advance of the session. The list of observers who attended the seventeenth session is available on the website of the Committee (https://publicadministration.un.org/en/cepa).

C. Agenda

11. The agenda of the seventeenth session of the Committee was as follows:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.
3. Readying institutions and policies for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:

(a) Promoting policy and institutional coherence in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals to be reviewed in depth by the 2018 high-level political forum and the other Goals;

(b) Building capacities and effectively mobilizing, allocating and managing budgetary resources for implementation of the 2030 Agenda;

(c) Building the awareness, competencies and skills of civil servants at the national and local levels.

4. Building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels:

(a) Elaborating principles of effective governance for sustainable development building on the work of the Committee at its sixteenth session;

(b) Engaging accountability mechanisms, civil society and the media in advising on and overseeing implementation of the Goals;

(c) Nature and challenges of misconduct and corruption in the public sector, and ways forward;

(d) Ensuring that civil society actors are able to participate in decision-making on implementing the Goals and contribute to progress;

(e) Promoting innovative ways of delivering services and open government in support of the Goals.

5. Supporting the transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies: enhancing and equipping institutions:

(a) Changes required in institutions and public administration at all levels to foster the transformation of societies required under the 2030 Agenda in urban and rural communities;

(b) Ensuring that actions by the private sector are compatible with sustainable development pathways through traditional and innovative forms of regulation and management.

6. Provisional agenda for the eighteenth session of the Committee.

7. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its seventeenth session.

12. To facilitate deliberations, the Committee considered item 4 (b) together with items 4 (d) and 5 (b) on matters relating to participation and engagement in the context of the 2030 Agenda, and item 4 (e) together with item 5 (a) on matters relating to the transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies.

D. Election of officers

13. The following members served as officers of the Committee during the seventeenth session:

Chair:
Geraldine J. Fraser-Moleketi (South Africa)

Vice-Chairs:
Geert Bouckaert (Belgium)
Louis Meuleman (Netherlands)
Moni Pizani (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela)

Rapporteur:
Upma Chawdhry (India)

Chapter III
Readying institutions and policies for implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

A. Promoting policy and institutional coherence in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals

Dimensions of coherence

14. The policy and institutional dimensions of coherence are both important aspects of sustainability governance and are highly interrelated. Policy coherence refers to achieving consistency between different policies within and across sectors and at different levels of government, while institutional coherence can be defined as the normative integration of institutional arrangements. Institutional coherence is a means to achieve policy coherence. Trust within the public sector is a precondition for efforts to promote policy and institutional coherence.

Strategic approaches to promoting policy and institutional coherence

15. To strengthen policy and institutional coherence, strategic approaches are needed that can address multiple challenges. These may include: (a) coordination (or structured cooperation among various government ministries); (b) integration; (c) policy alignment (mutual adaptation); (d) multilevel governance (e.g. classical top-down or cross-sectoral collaboration); (e) compatibility; (f) reconciliation; and (g) empowerment. It is necessary to create a strong capacity framework in the public sector beyond individual or siloed collaboration.

16. There is a need to promote policy coherence always in synergy with promoting institutional coherence, by adapting measures for the promotion of coherence to the specificities of the Sustainable Development Goals and to the context in which they will be implemented, and to involve the private sector, civil society and academia.

17. A key question is how to allocate resources, including through fiscal policy and budgetary mechanisms, while also strengthening information and data sharing within the public sector.

Tools and mechanisms for promoting policy and institutional coherence

18. There is no general blueprint or one-size-fits-all approach for promoting policy and institutional coherence for the Sustainable Development Goals. The mechanisms and tools for policy and institutional coherence include: (a) hierarchical governance; (b) network governance; and (c) market governance. Promoting coherence calls for having all three elements in one "tool box" and using each as appropriate in ways that are sufficiently compatible with national and organizational cultures.

19. Tools for coherence may need to be applied in combination, which requires integrative thinking from multiple perspectives. Such a "metagovernance" approach has emerged as a successful model to reduce the number and mitigate the impact of governance failures.

20. An information platform accessible to all stakeholders that is dedicated to dialogue and the identification of innovative solutions is important. Information systems are valuable for sharing reliable data, including in planning and budgeting, encouraging participation and promoting a sense of ownership. Particular efforts may be needed to ensure that marginalized groups have access to information and are engaged in decision-making.

Appraising institutional capacity for policy integration

21. Three dimensions could be considered in appraising institutional capacity for promoting policy coherence, namely analytical capacity, operational capacity and political capacity.

22. Analytical capacity is crucial in collecting data and generating the information required to ensure that decisions are evidence-based and policy options are sound. However, public sector analysts are limited in number in many developing countries. The quality and reliability of data can also be problematic, particularly in developing countries, where resource constraints and insufficient political will can hamper efforts to enhance data capacity.

23. Operational capacity refers to the ability of government to get things done and is closely linked to organizational procedures and the availability of financial and human resources. Common challenges include weak public financial management, inadequate revenue and resource sharing, and the absence of collaboration among central and local governments. Network-based approaches can be an important component of operational capacity, as seen in water and waste management in some countries where there is evidence of a change of mindsets, increased levels of civil society and private sector engagement, and improvements in work modalities. Such examples underscore the value of innovation and thinking outside the box, with strong stakeholder involvement. A cluster approach has proved to be useful in some cases.

24. Political capacity is concerned with the ability to engage key stakeholders in the integration process and to resolve conflicts arising from subsequent interaction. A critical success factor is the political capacity to ensure cross-sectoral, multilevel coherence. The capacity to manage deliberative processes and promote consensus building at all levels is essential.

25. In building capacity, there is scope for a global peer-to-peer learning mechanism to support the necessary change of structures, processes, skills and mindsets and to promote mutual learning, networking and knowledge exchange by all relevant stakeholders. In addition, national public administration schools and other training institutions should integrate the promotion of coherence for the Sustainable Development Goals in their curricula.

26. It may be pertinent to consider how policy and institutional coherence could be embedded in performance management systems of the public sector, since performance assessment also tends to be siloed.

B. Elaborating principles of effective governance for sustainable development

Review and adoption of a set of principles

27. The Committee considered the further elaboration of principles of effective governance for sustainable development, building on its work at its sixteenth session.[5] The essential purpose of the principles is to provide guidance to countries in addressing a broad range of practical governance challenges associated with the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The essential elements of effectiveness, accountability and inclusiveness of Sustainable Development Goal 16 are at the core of the principles framework, which aims to bring together and promote the further development of relevant standards and operational guidelines in all areas of institution-building that are relevant to the implementation of the Goals.

[5] See E/2017/44, chap. III.E.

28. The Committee again stressed that the principles and practices should not be viewed simply as a list of things that Governments should be doing but are of a voluntary nature. In discussing their purpose, scope and application, the Committee reiterated that, while the basic principles reflect values that inform governance for sustainable development, the utility of concrete practices associated with the principles could vary, depending on national and local contexts, visions, models, needs and priorities.

29. Drawing on the experience with the African Charter on Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration, the European Union-Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Principles of Public Administration, for European Union enlargement countries, as well as for European Neighbourhood Policy countries, and the Ibero-American Charter for the Public Service, the Committee agreed that a broad view should be taken of a country's administrative system. The principles would thus be relevant to any institution or organization that undertakes public service duties, as well as independent constitutional bodies, parliament and the judiciary within the scope of their scrutiny and oversight powers over the State Administration and both centralized and decentralized bodies.

30. The Committee reiterated that the principles must be consistent with the Charter of the United Nations and international law and the outcomes of major United Nations conferences and summits, as well as with relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and of the Economic and Social Council. A number of commonly used strategies for realizing the principles have been highlighted in such agreements over the years and are an integral part of the effective governance agenda.

31. Following an in-depth discussion of these matters, the Committee adopted the following principles of effective governance for sustainable development as a reference for future policy and practice:

Principles of effective governance for sustainable development

Preamble

The full realization of the Sustainable Development Goals and other internationally agreed development objectives will hinge in no small part on a common understanding of the basic principles of effective governance for sustainable development. The basic principles set out below are intended to clarify the governance agenda, taking into account different governance structures, national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. They have been developed by the Committee of Experts on Public Administration to help interested countries, on a voluntary basis, build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, with a view to achieving the shared vision for the people and the planet embodied in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. As basic principles, they apply to all public institutions, including the administration of executive and legislative organs, the security and justice sectors, independent constitutional bodies and State corporations. The principles are given depth and made operational through a selection of commonly used strategies and related practices, which are an integral and evolving part of this work.

Principle		*Commonly used strategies*
Effectiveness		
Competence	To perform their functions effectively, institutions are to have sufficient expertise, resources and tools to deal adequately with the mandates under their authority	• Promotion of a professional public sector workforce • Strategic human resources management • Leadership development and training of civil servants • Performance management • Results-based management • Financial management and control • Efficient and fair revenue administration • Investment in e-government
Sound policymaking	To achieve their intended results, public policies are to be coherent with one another and founded on true or well-established grounds, in full accordance with fact, reason and good sense	• Strategic planning and foresight • Regulatory impact analysis • Promotion of coherent policymaking • Strengthening national statistical systems • Monitoring and evaluation systems • Science-policy interface • Risk management frameworks • Data sharing
Collaboration	To address problems of common interest, institutions at all levels of government and in all sectors should work together and jointly with non-State actors towards the same end, purpose and effect	• Centre of government coordination under the Head of State or Government • Collaboration, coordination, integration and dialogue across levels of government and functional areas

Principle		*Commonly used strategies*
		• Raising awareness of the Sustainable Development Goals • Network-based governance • Multi-stakeholder partnerships
Accountability		
Integrity	To serve in the public interest, civil servants are to discharge their official duties honestly, fairly and in a manner consistent with soundness of moral principle	• Promotion of anti-corruption policies, practices and bodies • Codes of conduct for public officials • Competitive public procurement • Elimination of bribery and trading in influence • Conflict of interest policies • Whistle-blower protection • Provision of adequate remuneration and equitable pay scales for public servants
Transparency	To ensure accountability and enable public scrutiny, institutions are to be open and candid in the execution of their functions and promote access to information, subject only to the specific and limited exceptions as are provided by law	• Proactive disclosure of information • Budget transparency • Open government data • Registries of beneficial ownership • Lobby registries
Independent oversight	To retain trust in government, oversight agencies are to act according to strictly professional considerations and apart from and unaffected by others	• Promotion of the independence of regulatory agencies • Arrangements for review of administrative decisions by courts or other bodies • Independent audit • Respect for legality

Principle		*Commonly used strategies*
Inclusiveness		
Leaving no one behind	To ensure that all human beings can fulfil their potential in dignity and equality, public policies are to take into account the needs and aspirations of all segments of society, including the poorest and most vulnerable and those subject to discrimination	• Promotion of equitable fiscal and monetary policy • Promotion of social equity • Data disaggregation • Systematic follow-up and review
Non-discrimination	To respect, protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms for all, access to public service is to be provided on general terms of equality, without distinction of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, disability or other status	• Promotion of public sector workforce diversity • Prohibition of discrimination in public service delivery • Multilingual service delivery • Accessibility standards • Cultural audit of institutions • Universal birth registration • Gender-responsive budgeting
Participation	To have an effective State, all significant political groups should be actively involved in matters that directly affect them and have a chance to influence policy	• Free and fair elections • Regulatory process of public consultation • Multi-stakeholder forums • Participatory budgeting • Community-driven development
Subsidiarity	To promote government that is responsive to the needs and aspirations of all people, central authorities should perform only those tasks which cannot be performed effectively at a more intermediate or local level	• Fiscal federalism • Strengthening urban governance • Strengthening municipal finance and local finance systems • Enhancement of local capacity for prevention, adaptation and mitigation of external shocks • Multilevel governance

Principle		*Commonly used strategies*
Intergenerational equity	To promote prosperity and quality of life for all, institutions should construct administrative acts that balance the short-term needs of today's generation with the longer-term needs of future generations	• Sustainable development impact assessment • Long-term public debt management • Long-term territorial planning and spatial development • Ecosystem management

Relating the principles to concrete practices

32. Operationalizing the principles and undertaking related strategic actions that are known to be effective in particular contexts is essential to taking the work on principles to the next level. To be helpful, associated practices will need to be clearly relevant, feasible to implement, and based on sufficient empirical evidence of their impact on the achievement of the targets of the Sustainable Development Goals. To that end, it would be important to define criteria and mechanisms for evaluating the strength of the evidence of impact, together with other experts, and ensure that practices are well defined and actionable in different contexts, while allowing space for experimentation.

33. The Committee underlined the need to consider the role of public administration in different spheres of government action to further contextualize the application of the principles. Five layers of governance were identified as a model for understanding the everyday reality of institutions, comprising the management of individual organizations, collaboration across government, relations with non-State actors, organizational attitudes and behaviours, and governance at the systemic level. Each of the five layers should be effective, accountable and inclusive.

34. The Committee agreed that it would be valuable to work together with regional actors, such as the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and the African Union, both to continue to build on the experience of others with policy frameworks and standards relating to governance practices and to ensure that practices are well suited to different contexts. Similarly, it could be useful to elaborate the principles from a sectoral perspective, taking into account the interrelationships among the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Committee welcomed expressions of interest from United Nations organizations in this regard.

35. The principles could be linked with global efforts to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals by reflecting them in ongoing United Nations capacity development activities, as well as assessing development cooperation strategies and programmes. Similarly, self-assessment of relevant technical standards at the national level to promote alignment with the 2030 Agenda and the principle of leaving no one behind could also be beneficial. Case studies could further be collected and shared to illustrate the practices, in collaboration with interested observer organizations.

Linking with the work of the Praia Group on Governance Statistics

36. The Committee noted that it might be beneficial to link its work on the principles to initiatives to enhance the measurement of the impact of governance practices. The Committee and the Praia Group on Governance Statistics appeared to share common aims in this respect. Specifically, the ongoing work of the Praia Group on the

development of a handbook on governance statistics provided an important opportunity for collaboration that the Committee and the Group expressed interest in pursuing.

C. Building capacities and effectively mobilizing, allocating and managing budgetary resources for implementation of the 2030 Agenda

37. The Committee underscored that proper public financial management is essential to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. The sustainability of public finance does not depend on the sum of government expenditure or the size of the State but on the structure and efficacy of the public sector. This observation has important implications for the mobilization, allocation and management of budgetary resources.

Effectively mobilizing budgetary resources

38. Direct and indirect taxes are the main source of revenue for the public sector, including in many countries that are recipients of official development assistance. Efficient and fair revenue administration should thus be a central concern in efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda and in the pursuit of economic and social progress in general. While there is no one-size-fits-all approach — tax structures and processes differ, based on national context as well as local conditions and needs — certain approaches to strengthening revenue administration have yielded encouraging results.

39. An ideal system of tax administration promotes the highest degree of voluntary taxpayer compliance at the lowest possible cost. A foundation of such compliance is respect for the social contract through tax laws that are perceived to be fair and can be administered efficiently, effectively and with the highest degree of integrity. The trust engendered by the latter can then be reinforced with public campaigns on the benefits to society of taxpayer contributions. Open and transparent public data on revenues and expenditure have resulted in increased awareness of how tax contributions are beneficial to society, particularly when public financial data are published in a timely and comprehensive manner.

40. With regard to efficiency, some countries have found it beneficial to consolidate multiple revenue agencies, for example those responsible for direct taxes, indirect taxes and customs administration, in a central body. Digitization of tax filing and other procedures, and investment in the use of data analytics and artificial intelligence can also result in more efficient tax collection. Development of systems of regulatory impact assessment to ensure that the societal benefits of regulation outweigh the costs is also recommended.

41. Tax evasion, profit shifting, treaty abuse and ineffective tax systems are persistent problems in some countries, which substantially limit fiscal space and perpetuate socioeconomic inequalities. In addressing the challenges of the middle-income and, especially, low-income countries, both national and international actions are necessary to improve tax systems and to mobilize additional budgetary resources. At the global level, scaling up international tax cooperation to prevent illicit financial flows and money-laundering, and the more effective deployment and utilization of official development assistance, remain core issues. At the national and local levels, various strategic actions could be undertaken, such as enhanced management of tax debt and tax fraud, and the effective collection and use of financial data and information, including digital payments by online intermediaries.

Improving the allocation of public finances

42. In ensuring the efficient allocation of public resources, it is important to follow a structured and systematic approach to programming, evidence-based policymaking and effective policy evaluations, supported by the appropriate institutional arrangements.

43. Trust-building has an integral place in budgeting processes and in promoting effective legal, regulatory, monitoring and accountability frameworks. Participatory budgeting has been successful in building public trust and facilitating social cohesion, particularly at the local level.

44. Governments are encouraged to publish public financial data, including through open government data, in a timely and comprehensive manner. Such data may include executive budget proposals, enacted budgets and year-end and audit reports. A medium-term budgetary framework that is founded on credible data and multi-year forecasts, and within which all public organizations operate and are held accountable, is also recommended.

45. Participation and engagement are integral to the effective allocation of public resources. Management of public finance, especially at the local level, requires enhanced transparency, efficiency and participation, increased openness and fairness, and efficiency and effectiveness in budgeting and budgetary systems. Formal participation policies and mechanisms should be put in place, with the aim of improving public financial literacy. Governments could provide citizen budget guides that are simple to understand and accessible.

46. Performance budgets could helpfully be linked to outcomes related to the Sustainable Development Goals. One recommendation is to drive "Sustainable Development Goals accounting" in highlighting the impact of public budgeting in the implementation of the Goals.

Strengthening public financial management

47. The Committee underscored that political commitments are crucial to realizing public financial management reform and that domestic resource mobilization should start from the expenditure side of the budget. A close examination of the micro- and macrolevel resource management is necessary, including vis-à-vis revenues from natural resources.

48. Reducing waste and preventing corruption in public procurement, reporting and accounting are important. Corruption controls and financial and performance audits are essential, including through the establishment of clear reporting guidelines, training of public servants to instil a high standard of public values, particularly in public finance and budget-related agencies, and strong political support for honest government.

D. Building the awareness, competencies and skills of civil servants at the national and local levels

49. The effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda requires leaving no one, including no civil servant, behind. It also demands a shift towards a culture of lifelong learning and increased investment in training and skills development among civil servants and the broad spectrum of agents involved in the provision of public services, working under different forms of contract or partnerships, who all together constitute the public sector workforce.

50. Despite awareness-raising and training activities including workshops, consultations, advocacy, curriculum development and online learning platforms, many government representatives, civil servants and other public sector workers lack sufficient knowledge of the 2030 Agenda.

51. The creation and maintenance of a productive and competent civil service capable of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals necessitates comprehensive human resources development strategies based on ownership of the Goals, political will, integrity and transformative leadership. Many regional and national initiatives of leadership development and training in areas such as public policy analysis, participatory governance and political dialogue have aimed to build a common road map for civil servants as change agents.

52. Education institutions, including the schools of public administrations and civil service training and research institutes, have important roles to play in building awareness and imparting the skills necessary to implement the Sustainable Development Goals. Such curricula could be instrumental in instilling the necessary skill sets, for instance with regard to policy integration modalities, participatory decision-making, collaborative working arrangements, and partnerships.

53. A number of technical competencies are critical for the effective performance of civil servants, among them strategic thinking and management, analysis and use of evidence, communications, and financial, people and programme management. Soft skills, such as emotional intelligence and collaboration, coaching and mentoring, should be part of the overall curricula, as should managerial and leadership skills. Civil servants should be sensitized to the 2030 Agenda and to its linkages to other global, regional and national development objectives.

54. Awareness of the 2030 Agenda is particularly crucial among civil servants and other agents involved in service delivery at the local level. Although local training institutions are central to building the competencies and skills of civil servants, there is often a disconnect between such institutions and national human resource management institutions. As a result, competencies for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals on the ground may not be effectively imparted. Vertical integration is essential to ensuring the national-local coherence of the training needs and skills of civil servants and other public workers.

Strategic human resources management in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals

55. It is critical to understand how countries are managing their human resources in implementing the 2030 Agenda. Ensuring that human resource investment is not seen as just a cost is the first step. Second is making human resource departments aware of the skills needed to realize the Sustainable Development Goals; skill gaps mapping and assessment and the development of accurate and reliable data on skill profiles are pivotal. Third, it is important to have a long-term vision for the public sector, valuing and motivating civil servants and other public workers, enhancing productivity, supporting learning and career development, including through non-linear, multidirectional professional growth, and creating an enabling work environment. Future-oriented workforce planning can go a long way in ensuring that investment in training is cost-effective and supports the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

56. In addition to skills development, meritocratic, fair, transparent and timely recruitment of civil servants is critical, but "brain drain", outdated administrative norms and structures, and low pay, or even excessive privileges, and rigid stability may hinder such efforts. Innovative approaches to recruitment, training and retention, including through motivation-building and competency-based selection, are part of strategic human resource management. Ensuring that selection is consistent with

future-oriented skills, diversity, gender parity and inclusion of the marginalized is also vital. Similarly, assuring retention in times of political transition supports continuity of work, knowledge and institutional memory.

Implications of emerging technologies

57. Emerging technologies can rapidly enhance the way in which policies and programmes are designed and deployed. For example, digital identity, single information or data once-only systems and digital buses can reduce data errors, decrease cost, strengthen people-centred service delivery and enhance access in remote areas. Knowledge of advanced science and technology, data science and behavioural insights, among others, may be needed in all sectors. It is thus important to renew the focus on the use of technologies in the public sector and to profile, upgrade and continuously build public sector skills in information and communications technology (ICT), with particular attention to attracting young talent.

58. It is important for civil servants to understand the opportunities and challenges that technologies present. Technology uptake in the public sector should be both actively promoted and carefully considered. Adequate regulatory frameworks and policies are needed to guide the public sector in the selection of the most appropriate solutions while minimizing the possible adverse effects of new technologies. Governments, notably in developing countries, could also consider providing additional incentives to private sector participation in technology training and infrastructure development to expand service delivery channels.

E. Participation and engagement in implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and contributing to progress

59. In addressing a silo approach to public administration, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development spawns a new era of participatory decision-making that goes beyond partnerships. It calls for results-oriented, networked forms of governance involving all relevant actors. A strategy to end poverty and leave no one behind seen in some countries consists of the establishment of well-coordinated networks of resources and capabilities addressing specific Sustainable Development Goals.

Stakeholder engagement in post-conflict countries

60. Post-conflict countries present challenges including security and integration of alienated groups and ex-combatants as the furthest left behind and financial predicaments such as limited and inflexible budgets, corruption and illicit financial flows. The nature and degree of these strains can vary and depend, inter alia, on: (a) legacy and type of post-conflict State (post-colonial or failed versus weakened State, and different levels and types of resource endowment); (b) level of administration (national versus subnational); and (c) post-conflict phases (emergency phase after a conflict versus post-conflict reconstruction). Additional attention could be given to public management practices, such as adaptive programming and participatory mechanisms of exit and voice, to advance sustainable development targets in different post-conflict phases.

61. The Committee observed that providing additional resources to national Governments does not necessarily result in the transfer of these resources to remote conflict-affected areas. It could also be that national and subnational governments attach different degrees of importance to the Sustainable Development Goals. Thus, there is a particular need for a detailed analysis of local conditions and priorities in post-conflict countries.

62. Re-establishing legitimacy and trust are other challenges faced by post-conflict societies, where certain groups may have been systematically excluded and military, police and other institutions may be associated with repressive or corrupt practices. In such contexts, effective communication with the local communities in the local language is paramount.

Multi-stakeholder monitoring to implement Sustainable Development Goal 16

63. Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 16 necessitates the formulation, implementation and monitoring of indicators. There may be a need initially to focus on data collection and indicator definition, which may vary from country to country and can helpfully arise from multi-stakeholder processes. Subsequently, different agencies can engage in comprehensive consultations to debate the proposed indicators and provide input to the implementation and monitoring of legal, policy and programmatic guidance.

64. The more that monitoring is done, the more effective engagement becomes. Iteration is essential. In addition, the risk of exclusion due to hierarchical or biased institutional design can be addressed by the use of ICT, bottom-up programming and participatory budgeting. Narratives should also be presented and are as important as indicators in communicating shared objectives.

F. Nature and challenges of misconduct and corruption in the public sector and ways forward: the question of whistle-blower protection

65. The Committee observed that the protection of whistle-blowers required greater attention in addressing matters of public interest, such as the challenges of misconduct and corruption in the public sector.

Meaning and scope of whistle-blower protection

66. In practice, a whistle-blower could be any individual, group or institution that, upon becoming aware of a potentially illegal, illicit or other act with negative effects on the public interest, raises the alarm, thereby instigating a process of investigation, debate and, possibly, regulation. Whistle-blower protection, as distinct from witness protection, includes the reporting of criminal offences as well as administrative breaches with potential health, safety or other risks to the public. Often, a "serious wrongdoing" or an "overriding public interest" are prerequisites for whistle-blower measures to be invoked.

67. Whistle-blowing systems provide an early warning, making people aware of potential or ongoing corruption. Whistle-blower protection is aimed at protecting the identity of those who report to prevent unfair dismissal, harassment, discrimination, physical harm or other retaliation. Article 33 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption has encouraged many countries to enact legislative and regulatory measures to protect whistle-blowers acting in good faith and on reasonable grounds. Some regional bodies have issued whistle-blower protection guidelines. Progress notwithstanding, challenges remain in adopting, implementing and harmonizing whistle-blower systems.

Features and challenges of whistle-blower systems

68. The presence of anti-corruption frameworks and agencies does not guarantee that there will be adequate protection. Whistle-blowing systems should be transparent and secure to allow safe and effective reporting based on clear roles and responsibilities of all relevant actors. Effective whistle-blowing systems should go

beyond limited legal provisions providing comprehensive protection, including for non-criminal, administrative cases.

69. Effective whistle-blowing systems consist of, inter alia: (a) a specific law stipulating protection procedures and reporting channels; (b) clear roles and responsibilities for handling reports; (c) guaranteed confidentiality and/or anonymity; (d) criminal penalties for retaliation and false reporting; and (e) protection in case of retaliation. Countries can increase the effectiveness of their whistle-blowing systems by training civil servants in ethics, integrating whistle-blower protection in local legislation, collaborating and cultivating trust. Additional attention could be given to protecting the due process rights of civil servants to ensure the fair handling of cases, as well as the development of international standards in this area.

70. The most salient challenge faced in building effective whistle-blowing systems is the lack of a comprehensive framework or stand-alone legislation on whistle-blower protection. Other challenges relate to the capacity to handle and investigate whistle-blower reports, and to effective implementation through standardized procedures.

71. More specific implementation challenges may include: (a) lack of information on the number and anonymized content of whistle-blowing reports; (b) difficulties in gathering corroborating evidence; (c) oversight and sanctioning mechanisms and processes where more research, technical assistance and exchange of experiences are needed; and (d) cultural factors that may impede effective implementation in developed and developing countries alike.

72. Some solutions to these challenges include education on the merit and methods of reporting malpractice, strengthening public ethics and building social capital. Ethics officials play an important role as initial contacts for whistle-blowers. Public administrations can also draw on ICT in protecting the identity of whistle-blowers, for example in the use of anonymous and/or confidential email for reporting. An international whistle-blowing day could help to highlight the significance of the issue.

G. Supporting the transformation of societies required under the 2030 Agenda by enhancing and equipping institutions in urban and rural communities

73. The Committee emphasized that the 2030 Agenda presents substantial opportunities for Governments to rethink the role of institutions, forge a renewed social contract between the State and society and strengthen a culture of public management based on trust and in line with country-specific needs and objectives. Enhancing and equipping institutions in urban and rural communities is critical to promoting the societal transformation envisaged in the 2030 Agenda.

74. A new model of governance based on results-oriented and people-centric policies and institutions and effective, inclusive and participatory decision-making at the subnational level is the key to realizing the Sustainable Development Goals. The Committee reiterated that clarifying roles and responsibilities between national and subnational authorities is an essential component. Decentralization, however, requires time and careful consideration to constitutional and legal provisions relating to decision-making and deliberative processes, as well as the distribution of resources.

75. In some cases, the delegation of responsibility for public service delivery to local authorities, cross-subsidization and performance contracting, involving different levels of government, as well as the private sector and civil society, could be enhanced. Such multi-stakeholder partnerships can help to reduce inequalities, lower costs and apportion risks to provide the necessary impetus for economic growth

and innovation. In other cases, non-State actors could be engaged as co-creators of public services, or social financing could be employed to leverage collective skills and enhance the innovative capacity of civil society.

76. Digitization of public services, including single-window systems, can further reduce the cost of services and cut response times while increasing transparency and accountability through better tracking and monitoring. Supported by open data and access to information, open government can bring the State and society closer together.

77. Referring to the work of the Commission on Population and Development, the Committee noted that the transformation of societies is characterized by growing urban populations and an increase in the number of migrants, youth and older persons in many areas. Cities have the main role in urban development policies, providing basic services for all and addressing such challenges as protecting the urban environment and improving living conditions for the urban poor, including slum dwellers, yet subnational authorities are not always equipped to address such challenges.

78. To that end, governments at all levels could be encouraged to actively consider the impact of demographic changes on urban governance, municipal finance and local finance systems, local capacity for the prevention of, adaptation to and the mitigation of external shocks and the capacity of local authorities to ensure access for all people to public services.

Chapter IV
Future work of the Committee

79. The Committee will continue to align its work programme with the needs and priorities established by the Economic and Social Council, with a view to contributing effectively to the deliberations of the Council and assisting it in the performance of its functions.

80. At its eighteenth session, the Committee will work on the theme that the Council adopted for its 2019 session, "One world for all: empowering people to build equal and inclusive societies", and prepare policy recommendations on the governance and institutional aspects of that issue. The Committee will also contribute to the thematic review of the high-level political forum on sustainable development while taking stock of progress on Sustainable Development Goal 16.

81. The Committee agreed that in-depth consideration was needed of particular aspects of such broad institutional challenges. It decided to focus on enhancing the capacity of the public sector in core functional areas of administration, strengthening fiscal management, relating the principles of effective governance for sustainable development to concrete practices and results, and contributing to building institutions to promote peaceful and inclusive societies and provide access to justice for all.

82. The Committee also decided to keep its methods of work under review, and looked forward to further strengthening its intersessional preparations and action-oriented policy advice.

Annex

List of documents

Agenda item	*Title or description*
2	Provisional annotated agenda (E/C.16/2018/1)
3 (a)	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on promoting policy and institutional coherence for the Sustainable Development Goals (E/C.16/2018/2)
3 (a)	Conference room paper submitted by the Secretariat on appraising institutional capacity for integrated policymaking
3 (b)	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on building capacities and effectively mobilizing, allocating and managing budgetary resources for implementation of the 2030 Agenda (E/C.16/2018/3)
3 (c)	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on building the awareness, competencies and skills of civil servants at the national and local levels (E/C.16/2018/4)
4 (a)	Note by the Secretariat, prepared under the leadership of the experts, on elaborating principles of effective governance for sustainable development (E/C.16/2018/5)
4 (b)	Conference room paper on the issues for the current discussion: citizens' engagement in public decision-making, effective institutions and access to information
4 (c)	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on the question of the protection of whistle-blowers (E/C.16/2018/6)
4 (c)	Conference room paper on whistle-blower protection and the implementation of article 33 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption on the protection of reporting persons
5 (a)	Note by the Secretariat transmitting the expert paper on institutional transformation to strengthen the well-being of rural and urban communities: the case of Malaysia (E/C.16/2018/7)
5 (a)	Background note on the challenges for institutions in the transformation towards sustainable and resilient societies: draft contribution to the 2018 thematic review of the high-level political forum on sustainable development

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